

REMARKS

Claims 9 and 11-25 are pending. By the Office Action, claims 1-18 and 21-25 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102. (Claim 10 was previously canceled, but is indicated as pending and rejected in the Office Action.) By this Amendment, claim 9 is amended. Support for amended claim 9 can be found in original claims 19 and 20. No new matter is added.

Entry of this Amendment is proper under 37 C.F.R. §1.116 because the Amendment places the application in condition for allowance (for the reasons discussed herein) or places the application into better form for Appeal should an Appeal be necessary. The Amendment does not present any additional claims without canceling a corresponding number of finally rejected claims, does not raise the issue of new matter, and does not raise any new issues requiring additional search and/or consideration since the Amendment merely incorporates non-rejected claims into the independent claim and is thus directed to subject matter previously considered during prosecution. Furthermore, the amendments are necessary and were not earlier presented because they are in response to issues raised in the Final Rejection. Applicants respectfully request entry of the Amendment.

Applicants thank the Examiner for the indication that claim 20 is objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but is otherwise allowable. Applicants further note that claim 19 should also be indicated as allowable for at least the same reasons as claim 20, as claim 19 includes similar limitations to claim 20. Furthermore, claim 19 is nowhere rejected in the Office Action, as the previous rejection to claim 19 was overcome.

I. **Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §102**

Claims 1-6, 8-18 and 24 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over U.S. Patent No. 6,072,010 to Puyenbroek, and claims 1-18 and 21-23 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b)

over U.S. Patent Publication No. 2003/0057601 to Reitz. Applicants note that claim 10 was canceled in the previous Amendment, and thus should not be included in the rejections.

Although Applicants do not necessarily agree with this rejections, in the interest of advancing prosecution claims 1-8 are canceled and independent claim 9 is amended to incorporate the alternative subject matter of allowable claim 20 and non-rejected claim 19. Claims 19 and 20 are retained in the application, as they still further limit the alternative subject matter of claim 9. Accordingly, claim 9 and its dependent claims are patentable over the cited references. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are respectfully requested.

II. Conclusion

In view of the above amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the above-identified patent application is in condition for allowance. Favorable consideration and prompt allowance are therefore respectfully requested.

Should the Examiner believe anything further would be necessary in order to place the application in condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicants' undersigned representative at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,


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